



2021–2023 Strategic Roadmap

Executive Summary

Genesis of this Strategic Roadmap

During the fall of 2020, the California Landscape Stewardship Network (CA Network) Steering Committee undertook a process to review Network successes, to assess current needs and opportunities, and to chart a course forward. The Steering Committee relied on several sources for candid feedback and new ideas, including:

- targeted interviews with Steering Committee members and key CA Network partners/advisers,
- a Network-wide participants survey, and
- in-depth discussions among the Steering Committee on key issues.

What we heard was agreement that there are specific areas where the CA Network has been successful as well as opportunities for evolution or growth. One of the key findings was that the CA Network does not act like a formal organization, but rather serves as a platform for people to work together in new ways. Because it works on emergent needs and opportunities, and remains highly adaptive and constantly in process, it needs a “strategic roadmap” rather than a traditional strategic plan. This document provides that roadmap though guidance on how to maintain Network strengths and ways to sustain its ongoing and successful journey.

We consider this strategic roadmap to be a living document, and welcome questions, feedback, and further insights from our community of practice and collaborators. Please direct these communications to Devin Landry, CA Network Coordinator, at dlandry@parksconservancy.org.

Executive Summary of Focal Areas for 2021 – 2023

The following strategic areas will be where the CA Network focuses its efforts between 2021 and 2023. However, this priorities list is not exhaustive, and the Network will continue to be adaptive and responsive to the needs of its participants as well as to emerging issues and opportunities.

It is also important to recognize that the CA Network has already built tremendous momentum around the specific objectives laid out below. In a short time, the Network has increased capacity for collaboration and systems-level thinking. It has also built credibility as a statewide convener of stewardship practitioners working towards pragmatic solutions at scale. In our surveys, this credibility was perceived as one the Network’s greatest assets, and there was widespread agreement around prioritizing our role as a convener over the next several years.

Focal Areas: Peer Exchange & Capacity Building

Reinstitute in-person convenings, forums, and peer exchange post-pandemic

CA Network participant survey results suggest that convenings and peer exchange are widely viewed as the Network's heart and the foundation of its success. The next step is to determine what form convenings take post-COVID and how to financially sustain this work.

Engage more people & unlock more ideas

The CA Network is actively exploring ways to engage a) more people and communities representing diverse stewardship voices and activities, including California's tribes and bands, working lands/forests and agriculture, sustainable recreation, and more, b) a broader range of racially/culturally/ethnically diverse participants, and c) a wider suite of southern California and Central Valley partnerships.

Rollout collaborative leadership training

Developing the work of the [Collaborative Leadership Roundtable](#) into a multi-faceted training program, delivered by a cadre of instructors will help build capacity among practitioners to craft collaborative, durable solutions to 21st century conservation challenges.

Focal Area: Systems Solutions

Implement *Cutting Green Tape*

The coming years will offer unique opportunities to provide leadership and ongoing engagement to help implement the initial recommendations in the [Cutting Green Tape](#) report, which is focused on improving regulatory processes for beneficial restoration actions. The Network will also provide thought leadership on the next phase, which will look at ways to improve the ways public funding systems can support landscape stewardship.

Identify additional systems solutions

The Steering Committee will collaborate with CA Network participants to determine future needs for systems solutions (e.g., data sharing, etc.) to prioritize in addition to *Cutting Green Tape*.

Engage on priority policy areas

The CA Network remains a non-advocacy group that recognizes that it is critical to have state policies that reflect the values, principles, and actions of cross-boundary collaboration. The Network will continue to explore policy areas that can improve regional designations to better facilitate meeting statewide goals on climate change and biodiversity, elevate and connect networks to help solve cross-boundary environmental challenges, and implement relevant statewide plans at a landscape scale.

Focal Area: Building the Landscape Stewardship Movement

Continue to actively support the paradigm shift toward large landscape stewardship within the conservation field

Advancing a shared understanding of the shift underway towards landscape-scale stewardship will require clearly articulating the core principles that demonstrate the value and relevance of stewardship to meet today's conservation challenges. The CA Network will continue to focus on building relationships with practitioners, funders, policymakers, and other conservation stakeholders to promote a landscape stewardship approach.

Continue to invite conversations to support movement building beyond our community of practice

The CA Network will continue pursuing connections with sectors and audiences outside the historical milieu of conservation practitioners, policymakers, and advocates. The goal will be to solidify relationships with change actors in sectors such as public health, youth education and advocacy, transportation and infrastructure, etc. The CA Network will begin identifying synergies with these sectors as well as ways to foster a more holistic approach to shared stewardship of our communities and landscapes through this broader network.

Implement "Stewardship.2021" roundtables and forums

Through a sequential series of gatherings held under the umbrella of Stewardship.2021, the CA Network aims to chart a path forward that catalyzes the practice of landscape stewardship at the necessary scale. We will use what we learn to articulate a roadmap for continuing to build this movement through 2022 and 2023.

Focal Area: Sustaining the CA Network

Enhance network capacity

The CA Network's ambitious scope of work has led us to the inevitable question of how to sustain this high level of activity. The Network will expand the size of the Steering Committee by four members in 2021 to both increase our capacity and diversify the group's membership. In 2021 and 2022, we will also develop a business plan for financial sustainability.

Maintain flexibility

Throughout its evolution over the next few years, the CA Network wants to continue to be nimble and adaptable and not become too formal or bureaucratic. This means creating the mechanisms for our diverse participants to be and stay engaged, while not creating too many formal processes that can hamper our ability to be responsive to opportunities and needs.

Explore a "regional hub" model

In 2021 and 2022, the CA Network will look at models that allow for greater exchange with its growing body of participants, offers a mechanism for them to engage with the Steering Committee, and connects regions to relevant state-level interests and goals.